



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

Online Version: <https://www.feedthefuture.gov/article/feed-future-invests-tanzanian-students-transform-agriculture-sector>

Feed the Future Invests in Tanzanian Students to Transform Agriculture Sector

Feed the Future's Innovative Agricultural Research Initiative (iAGRI) is improving food security and agricultural productivity in Tanzania by strengthening the training and research capacity of [Sokoine University of Agriculture](#) and the Tanzanian National Agricultural Research System. To help accomplish this goal, iAGRI is sponsoring 120 Tanzanian students in their pursuit of advanced degree training in agriculture and nutrition at a consortium of six U.S. universities led by The Ohio State University (OSU), as well as universities throughout Africa and other parts of the developing world.

Feed the Future spoke with OSU professor and iAGRI project director David Kraybill, and OSU student and iAGRI research fellow Rita Mirondo to learn more about how academics and researchers in both the United States and Tanzania are helping to drive agricultural growth and long-term global food security.

Q: *How is the agriculture sector growing in Tanzania?*

Dave: Agriculture can be an engine of growth – especially in a place like Tanzania where the bulk of the population is still rural. The Government of Tanzania has emphasized market development and making agricultural inputs more available, which are two main drivers of growth. This results in increased output by the smallholder farmers who are increasingly able to get their crops to market.

Rita: Growth will be experienced at its fullest if the citizens and farmers are more skilled and treat agriculture as a business. This will lead to proper use of inputs, growing better crop varieties, advancement in irrigation schemes, and bringing about transition from subsistence to commercial agriculture. For growth to be sustainable, engaging youth in agriculture will be key.

Q: *Dave, why is investing in research important for the agriculture sector in Tanzania?*

Dave: Investing in research is important because the food and agriculture sector is transforming rapidly. Tanzania has a growing population, especially in urban areas. As society urbanizes there is a shift in demand for food – the diet changes. Research expertise is needed to inform and support that shift, specifically on production of processed foods which is what urban populations demand.

Q: *Rita, what do you hope your research will contribute to food security in Tanzania and what do you plan to do when you return to Tanzania?*

Rita: My current research focuses on improving the quality of mango juice and tomato juice and sauce in terms of nutrition and flavor and other physicochemical properties at a reduced production cost. This will encourage processing of these crops and reduce the post-harvest losses associated with fruits and vegetables. Upon my return to Tanzania I will continue working with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives to link farmers with new food processing opportunities. I also hope to share food processing information that I have learned at OSU with farmers and small-scale enterprises. I one day hope to start a food-processing business; why should we be importing fruit juices from other countries when we have lots of fruits in Tanzania?

Q: *How is the iAGRI project, as part of Feed the Future, making a positive impact in Tanzania?*

Dave: In addition to sending 120 Tanzanian students to the United States to pursue their Master's and Doctoral degrees, iAGRI is building capacity through training. At Sokoine University of Agriculture in Tanzania, the project sponsors workshops for new instructors and is installing classroom technology requested by the university. iAGRI is also creating a classroom services unit to support instructors on equipment usage and helping to create a better library so researchers and other Tanzanians have greater online access to agriculture literature.

Most recently, Sokoine University has asked for help restructuring its leadership development and change management initiative. The administration will seek iAGRI's assistance to create a program that will align the university's teaching and research programs with the development needs of the country.

Dave Kraybill is Professor of Agricultural, Environmental, and Development Economics at The Ohio State University, where his research and teaching focus on food security, climate change and rural development in Africa. He currently directs the Innovative Agricultural Research Initiative, a Feed the Future project in Tanzania managed through USAID.

Rita Mirondo is a PhD Student in Food Science and Technology at The Ohio State University. She received both her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Food Science at Sokoine University of Agriculture in Morogoro, Tanzania. Prior to beginning her doctoral studies, Rita worked for the Tanzanian Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives in crop development.